

World Cup Hits Soldier Hollow By Storm

BY COURTNEY GRESSMEN

Wave Sports Editor

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For the many spectators that showed up to watch the World Cup Nordic Festival this past week at Soldier Hollow, they were given a glimpse of what the 2002 Winter Olympic Games will be like next February.

From Wednesday's start up events, to Thursday's opening ceremonies, to Sunday's final sprint races. It was an exciting week to show case what is becoming a very popular sport in the United States.

Wednesday's races included the men's 30 km mass start and the women's 5 km pursuit (classical and freestyle) races.

The women's races saw some spectacular racing when Canada's Beckie Scott placed fourth. This helped light the spark for the U.S. team, because Scott dates U.S. Ski team member Justin Wadsworth.

Wadsworth was so excited about Scott's finish that he didn't think about his race. He did go on to place eighth, with a time of 1:13:54.2. This was the best finish by any U.S. cross country racer since 1984. This is an event the Europeans usually dominate, but it is starting to become a strong U.S. sport as well.

Johann Muehlepp of Spain, won the event in a time of 1:11:23.4. Christian Hoffmann of Austria was second, and Rene Sommerfeldt of Germany finished third. Other U.S. racers to place were: Andrew Johnson, 25th, Rob Whitney, 29th,

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Wave photo by Courtney Gressmen

Wasatch County got a good look at what the 2002 Olympics will look like next year. This past week, the Nordic Ski Festival was held at Soldier Hollow, hosting the World Cup for men and women's cross country skiing. Above: Racers participate in the 4x5 km relay, which was held as part of Saturday's events.

time defending champion at 184-pounds, and as been named the outstanding wrestler both his freshman and sophomore years.

"Wrestling is a strange sport," Steve said. "There are days when you can have a bad day and there are days when you can have a good one. I'm happy for Cael."

"Cael works awful hard and I am pleased with where he is at," added Steve.

Steve also said that Cael has been trying to maintain his focus, because the media has been hounding him. It really started when Cael hit his 90th win.

"They make jokes about Cael being quiet with

*awful hard
and I am
pleased with
where he is at."*

**-Steve Sanderson
Cael's Father**

...fere with what Cael is accomplishing.

Along with being ranked first in the 184-pound class nationally, Cael is also ranked fourth in freestyle competition as of Dec. 4. Brother Cody is ranked sixth in Greco-Roman Rankings and eighth in freestyle. Cody is also currently working as a coach at Iowa State. Cole Sanderson, who is a senior this year, is ranked seventh nationally in the 157-pound class and has a record of 20-2 this year.

"Cole is doing pretty well," Steve said.

Congratulations to Cael and his two brothers, Cody and Cole, for what they have accomplished at Iowa State University.

Anderson, Binkerd, Loertscher, and Buchanan) placed first, and then finished second in the 400 free relay.

After hosting Granger and South Summit, the swim team traveled to the Salt Lake Invitational. Again the boys team prevailed, placing among some of the best competition in the state.

The 200 medley relay (Seawright, Hicken, Anderson, and Pearson), was third overall with a time of 1:51.30. This was one of their best times of the year. The same team then placed 16th

free relay.

Individually Wasatch some big finishes from Hicken, Anderson, and Seawright.

Hicken finished fifth in the 100 fly, knocking three seconds off his original time. He also placed second in the 50 free.

Anderson was fifth in the breaststroke and eighth in the 50 free. Seawright finished fourth in the 100 free and fourth in the backstroke.

Others placing for Wasatch were: Mansfield, 12th and 14th; Kevin Pearson, 28th and 29th; Gardner Seawright, 39th and

free and 21st in the 100 fly.

B. Anderson was 30th in the 50 free and then she placed 11th in the 100 backstroke.

Other Lady Wasps placing were: Olpin 82nd and 34th; Kowallis, 80th; and Loertscher 60th and 29th.

The Wasps were in Vernal last Friday, but results were unavailable at press time.

Wasatch will host one final meet on Friday, Jan. 19, beginning at 4:00 p.m.

They will then travel to Park City on Jan. 26-27th for the Region 10 meet.



County Sports, Activities, & Recreation Schedule At a Glance Events Scheduled



Wasatch High Sports

Wasatch @ Tiger Grizz Tournament (wrestling)

The Wasatch Wasp wrestling team will travel to Idaho for another big wrestling tournament of the year. Last year the Wasps won the Tiger Grizz Tournament and this year they look to do it again. The Wasps are doing well this year and their younger kids are stepping up to help them out. The Wasps will travel to Idaho on Friday, Jan. 19 and return Saturday, Jan. 20. Good luck to the Wasatch High School wrestling team.

Union @ Wasatch / Uintah @ Wasatch (girls basketball)

Wasatch will host the Union Cougars on Wednesday, Jan. 17. The Cougars are third in Region 10 right now and almost knocked off second ranked Judge. The Wasps will then host the Uintah Utes on Friday, Jan. 19. This will be the second and last time the Wasps will meet Uintah before the state tournament at the end of February. Games times will be 3:30, 5:15, and 7:00.

Union @ Wasatch / Uintah @ Wasatch (boys basketball)

Wasatch is coming off a tough loss to to Park City and will look to pick up wins over Union and Uintah this week. The Wasps will host Union on Wednesday, Jan. 17 and will play Uintah on Friday, Jan. 19. The Wasps defeated Union last year and lost to Uintah this year 101-55. Good luck

Waspettes Dominate State Competitors



Individual-soloist competitors from left to right: Krystalina Berg, Allison Aezer, Crystal Wooton, and

OFF TO THE RACES

Soldier Hollow Hosts Successful World Cup, Passes Important Olympic Test



The best in the world race up the track at Soldier Hollow during the men's 30K mass-start.

DEREK JENSEN
COURIER STAFF

Living up to its billing as perhaps the finest all-around venue for next year's Winter Games, Soldier Hollow gracefully passed its Olympic test during last week's World Cup races.

The event marked the first FIS

(International Ski Federation) cross-country World Cup in the United States in over a decade. The last one, held at nearby Mountain Dell in 1989, was rife with problems. But the races near Midway, which along with this weekend's jumping at the Utah Olympic Park are part of the Nordic Ski Festival, erased any negative memories.

"It was just wonderful," said Bob Mathis, Wasatch County Olympic coordinator who beamed as he strolled out of the vendor tent with a cup of hot chocolate.

The Nordic festival will continue this weekend with races at Soldier Hollow on Saturday and Sunday — all free to spectators. But the first, and largest hurdle was overcome last Wednesday when the sprawling 16-mile bowl-like hillside opened its gates for the men's 30K mass-start. Despite a sprinkling of fresh snow that slowed the fast track, athletes raved after powering up side gullies and traversing the mountain, which was often awash in sunshine.

"The FIS liked it and the winner said it was the best course he had skied on in 10 years," said John Aalberg, a two-time Olympian who serves as cross-country project manager for the Salt Lake Organizing Committee.

The course was under scrutiny for two reasons. Last year, due to warm temperatures and lack of snow making equipment, truckloads of the white stuff had to be hauled in from Wolf

WORLD CUP continued on A5

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Everett Cook, former director of the Utah Historical Society and emeritus historian at the University of Utah, responding to Gov. Mike Leavitt's plan to get the state into the history business by appointing a historian to his staff at a salary of \$56,000 to chronicle his third term.

"The further people travel from home, the more their ethics and morality drop."

—Peter Tarlow, a sociologist specializing in tourism, addressing Utah law enforcement officials on what to expect from visitors during the 2002 Winter Games.

Sources: *Deseret News*, Salt Lake Tribune

SIGNPOSTS

↓ The governor's office is still burning over a Rolly & Wells report in the Salt Lake Tribune that dinged Gov. Mike Leavitt for authorizing inauguration day fireworks at the State Capitol during the height of the temperature inversion. State Environmental Quality had designated a "No Burn" day.

↔ Ex-Rep. Merrill Cook, R-Utah, is at loose ends now

↓ First, Jean Blanton charges on Anasazi In Now, in brief Utah Supreme Court Redds and desecrate the language with points, under es, words similar excess appealing to reverse Moa missal of ch

WORLD CUP

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Creek road. "After that, operators were taking no chances," Mathis said. "They had been making snow since November."

Another factor was the altitude, which falls under the maximum allowed by FIS by a couple meters. But a majority of the international skiers, who train at much lower altitudes, arrived in town weeks earlier to get acclimated. "Many of them are testing what they'll do next year," said Aalberg



Cars and trailers stack up at Soldier Hollow.

who played a key role in developing the venue.

Throughout the 11-day Nordic Ski Festival, coverage via a live TV signal has been beamed to over 3 million people in Europe, where cross-country skiing is immensely popular. The challenge for Soldier Hollow, which will host a full slate of 16 days of competition during the Olympics, is to prove to a passive American audience that biathlon

and cross-country is not boring.

U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association vice president of athletics, Alan Ashley, thinks the new Day Lodge and well-planned stadium area will provide a remedy.

"These are state-of-the-art facilities, which should help produce the challenge and drama we expect from the Olympics," he said, "and we're certain the World Cup community will be pleased with what they see."

Crowds of spectators, predictably sparse mid-week but larger during the weekend, took prompts from the public address broadcasters to roar their approval. On

opening day, over 100 local students were bussed in from Midway Elementary and J.R. Smith schools to see the races. Not surprisingly, the family members of athletes showed up en force — some with faces painted ringing cowbells — to display their rabid support.

Vendors served food and drinks adjacent to

the stadium bleachers, which provided a view of the majority of the trails. Small groups of portable restrooms and phones were also next to the seating, meaning viewers could avoid a treacherous walk up the hill to the Day Lodge. "The idea was to put toilets where people needed them," Mathis said.

The Olympic dry run brought with it, however, increased bureaucracy.

Though venue coordinators worked well with hundreds of SLOC volunteers, officials had a difficult time shepherding the horde of media, coaches and vendors. Mathis, who said the SLOC employees acted more like "generals" than "servants," called the increase in manpower a necessary evil to get ready for 2002.

"They should make themselves helpful and when not helpful, invisible," he added. "And that I think they can work on."

Perhaps the most significant service during the World Cup came from locals who opened their homes for timing personnel and race officials who couldn't afford to stay in hotels. "That was done out of the generosity of their

hearts, there was no money exchanged," Mathis continued. "Next year we're going to offer this for families of athletes."

Local business also benefited from the Nordic visitors. Restaurants reported steady business, while rooms filled up at Inn At The Creek, The Blue Boar Inn, Holiday Inn Express and the Danish Viking Inn. "I even placed

one guy at Mac's Motel," Mathis said.

Many of the athletes and coaches were also housed at The Homestead Resort.

For Aalberg, who fought hard for Soldier Hollow's Olympic selection, a successful World Cup is just what he expected.

"We're still learning a lot in terms of parking and crowd management," he said. "But for SLOC this has been a terrific test."

"The winner said it was the best course he had skied on in 10 years"

JOHN AALBERG,
SLOC cross-country
project manager



Spectators line the fences and bridge to get a glimpse as skiers fly by.

EDITORIAL

County Shows World, 'We Can Do This.'

Last week's World Cup was a truly remarkable event. It went off relatively painlessly and showed the world and the International Olympic Committee that we could host a world class event without screwing up the details.

Of course we already knew that, hell Swiss Days attracts more visitors in one day than the Olympics will bring in it's entire ten day run, but the "Big Boys" needed to make sure we could perform up to their standards. By all accounts we did. Word came down from the "Most High" that the brass were very pleased with the event, some calling it the best World Cup ever. And it was an extraordinary event. Even though at times there

seemed to be more volunteers than spectators, everyone, paid staff, athletes, volunteers and the spectators had smiles on. Conversation was fast, loose, multilingual and happy. The true feeling of amateur athletics seemed to come out at this event, in stark contrast to the unseemly "dash for cash" underbelly, now a legacy of the I.O.C. "Olympic Family." This crowd put the sport first. How refreshing.

And a big thanks goes out to the scores of volunteers, most from Wasatch County, but a surprising number from around the country and world. These folks manned their posts in snow storms with freezing feet, answering spectator and media questions, explaining the site, track layout, rules and most importantly, where to find a place to warm up. The entertainment was great and the sponsors deserve a huge pat on the back. The

entertainment seemed to thrill those of all ages, from the kids makeup artists, balloon animals, jugglers, a quick draw "gun slinger" and truly amazing horse and roping tricks. The mountain man/cowboy exhibits with accompanying livestock and livery were a great touch, giving visitors a taste of our heritage and history. The various musical groups were high quality entertainment, including our own "Famous Larry Elliot". Everyone seemed to have a great time. We never saw a frown on a face (except those trying in vain to find thier credentials, but that's another story.)

We still have questions about SLOC; the bribery, the questionable decisions of where the funds are spent and how Wasatch County is being treated as a poor relative, but those controversies will have to wait for another day. For this week our hat's off to The World Cup Organizers, our

County Olympic Coordinating Office and most of all to the scores of volunteers who made this event a smashing success. You all deserve a heart-felt thanks for a job well done. We locals never had any doubt, now everyone knows. We can do this, no sweat.



Larry Elliot

GUEST COMMENTARY

Equal Districts Means Fair Elections